



Prevention Research 2023 – Post conference report

Event Summary

Conference Organisers

[The UK Prevention Research Partnership Community of Practice](#) was responsible for hosting the first ever Prevention Research conference. The Community of Practice has created an infrastructure and an active learning network for UKPRP funded groups that is building a legacy of collaboration and outputs in areas of shared interest and challenge to facilitate improved prevention research, policy and practice. The Community of Practice is transitioning and re-branding into a 'Prevention Research Network' to incorporate those currently outside the UKPRP to join. [Please sign up if you are interested in joining the Prevention Research Network.](#)

Venue

The Royal Society of Edinburgh, Scotland, UK

Overview

Over the two days of November 14 & 15 2023, the UKPRP brought together a range of prevention research stakeholders to share and discuss the latest research on preventing non-communicable disease and reducing health inequalities across the UK. The conference showcased NCD prevention research from UKPRP-funded consortia as well as the wider UK research community, and also encouraged discussions on emerging research practice including collaborations between academics and public or policy stakeholders, maximising impact, systems approaches, and managing large scale prevention research projects.

The objectives of the conference were:

- To bring together UKPRP funded groups in person for the first time.
- To foster discussions and strengthen connections between prevention researchers and research users such as policy makers, local & national governments and advocacy groups.
- To promote the Prevention Research Network, widening out membership to everyone in the prevention research space, not just UKPRP members.
- To encourage attendees and their colleagues to join the interest groups in areas of shared interest/challenge.



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Conference Format

The two-day conference comprised of keynote speeches from two well renowned experts, Professor Sandro Galea and Alison Cox, and a conversation panel with the UKPRP consortia directors. These plenary sessions were recorded and can be found on the [UKPRP website](#).

There were also three symposia, nine workshops, thirty-five oral presentations and twenty-five innovative gallery style posters. The conference was structured to foster discussions between prevention researchers and stakeholders. This was achieved by the programme showcasing research conducted across the 11 UKPRP funded groups and wider prevention research community. The interactive workshops were led by both UKPRP research teams and research teams from the wider prevention community. Time for networking was purposefully built into the programme to strengthen connections between prevention researchers and research users.

Conference Themes

The main theme was prevention research, however there were sub-themes that ran across many of the sessions over the 2-day conference.

- **Theme 1: Systems:** The UKPRP set out to build and support research groups to drive the broad systems-level changes required to prevent NCDs. This was a key focus of the conference with 2 workshops, addressing such questions as:
 - What can be done to address the main challenges when taking a systems approach in prevention research?
 - Challenges & successes in a systems approach – what are the lessons learnt from partnership working in Liverpool?

One symposium was presented specifically on a systems approach in an unhealthy urban development project, and 4 oral presentations taking place on applying systems perspectives to prevention research across a range of disciplines.

- **Theme 2: Health inequalities:** The UKPRP set out in its vision statement to have a specific focus on health inequalities. This theme was discussed right throughout the conference, with all UKPRP consortia incorporating this in their research. This theme was emphasised right from the start of the conference as our first keynote speaker, Prof. Sandro Galea, challenged us to think about the underlying structural inequities during the Covid-19 pandemic and the direct impact they had, as well as calling for radical compassion moving forward.
- **Theme 3: Co-production and working with users:** Our second keynote speaker, Alison Cox from the NCD Alliance, stated that evidence of effective interventions are critical for convincing governments and improving health policies. There has recently been a shift towards approaches that focus on the voices of those who will be impacted most by new initiatives, services, or these policies. This was reflected in the conference programme with a workshop introducing how to do this effectively, along with 2 oral presentations on how beneficial a co-design approach can be.
- **Theme 4: Management of interests and commercial interactions:** Another topic gaining more and more attention in prevention research is how to manage the influence of commercial organisations, and the methods that are best placed to aid in managing conflicts of interest in general. With experts in this area present at the conference, discussions often involved this topic and there was a symposium specifically on this subject: Managing commercial interactions in prevention research: views, experiences & ways forward.
- **Theme 5: Innovative methods:** The UKPRP states that it aims to ‘support methodological innovation’ and this was evident through the wide of research presented throughout the



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conference. There was a session specifically highlighting particularly innovative or cutting-edge methods that included synthetic populations, look-alike modelling for data integration and using natural experiments to evaluate population health.

- **Theme 6: Future prevention challenges:** The focus was not solely on the present challenges facing prevention research, but also future challenges too. There were several workshops drawing attention to topics that require increasingly more attention, such as confronting systemic racism in prevention research and climate change and how it interacts with public health. There was also a workshop specifically focused on creating a framework for future prioritisation & actions, trying to map out a 10-year vision for public health prevention in Scotland.

Attendees

191 individuals registered for the conference over the two days, with day one seeing the greater attendance of 182 compared to 176 on day two. To encourage students, Early-career researchers, and members of public or third sector organisations to attend, complementary attendance was awarded to these individuals. Presenters and attendees consisted of researchers from across the UKPRP Consortia ([ActEarly](#), [GROUNDSWELL](#), [Kailo](#), [SIPHER](#), [SPECTRUM](#), [TRUUD](#) & [VISION](#)), academics from across the UK, including members from four different UK Research and Innovation councils (Economic and Social Research Council, Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council, Medical Research Council & Natural Environment Research Council). There was also a considerable number of representatives from public and third sector organisations, see table 1.

Table 1: Organisations with at least one representative that attended the Prevention Research 2023 conference.

Action on Smoking and Health	Alcohol Change UK
Alcohol Focus Scotland	ASH Scotland
Association of Directors of Public Health Yorkshire and Humber	Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
Breast Cancer UK	British Heart Foundation Scotland
City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council	Families in Trauma and Recovery
Fife voluntary Action	Inspiring Scotland
Kidney Research UK	Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust
NCD Alliance	NCD Alliance Scotland
NHS Lothian	North Yorkshire Council
Obesity Action Scotland	Office of Health Improvement and Disparities
Pancreatic Cancer Action	Public Health Wales
Queen's Nursing Institute Scotland	Research Data Scotland
Royal Free NHS Foundation Trust	Scottish Government
Wellcome Trust	Welsh Government
World Cancer Research Fund International	

Prize winners

We asked all conference attendees to complete a feedback form, which contained a section to nominate the best presenter and best session they attended.

We are delighted to announce the winner of best presenter is: **Anna Le Gouais!**

And the best session was the workshop on **Systems Approaches for Prevention Research** by **Philip Garnett, Leandro Garcia & Jeremy Hilton!**



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